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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Federal Extension Service
Washington 25, D. C.

SUMMARY

NATIONAL SURVEY OF EXTENSION'S AGRICULTURAL DATA NEEDS

The following statements summarize the agricultural data surveys made by State extension services in 45 States and 3 Territories. Many of these State committees conducted surveys of county extension personnel to determine the needs for agricultural data. In many of the States, the State statistician and others outside of Extension participated in the data survey.

Details of the reports sent in by each State have been furnished to the agricultural data committee of the American Farm Economic Association and to representatives of the Crop Reporting Service and agricultural Census Bureau. In cooperation with the Federal Extension Service these groups are making an intensive study of your reports. A determination will be made of those parts of your requests which can be obtained within the limits of present resources of the Crop Reporting Service and the Census Bureau. A further determination is also being made of additional resources needed to achieve many of the changes you requested. Additional research is required for long-range improvement.

In connection with this survey it is desirable to keep in mind that certain types of data can be supplied more efficiently and more effectively at the local and State levels. It is the function of the national government to perform those activities that are within the national interest, and to provide technical help and leadership where needed to obtain a minimum of standardized data by States, counties, and minor civil divisions through existing agencies. Much of the data requests are of a local nature and will need to be supplied locally. However, the committee is attempting to assist you further on this problem by the development of a bibliography of available agricultural data and the development of a training program in the use and acquisition of additional local data.

The reports of all of the States emphasized the important place that agricultural data have in the State and county extension programs. All reports indicate a strong desire to continue to receive all the data now collected and made available by the Crop Reporting Service and the Census Bureau. Likewise, each State report emphasized that their needs for agricultural data are not now being fulfilled. Recommendations were made for changes in the form of some data and a wide range of items were suggested where new data are needed.

The need for having available agricultural data on a county basis was among the chief needs mentioned.

Requests also included some information to be made available on a township or minor civil division basis. They wanted more frequent collection of some data. Much new data were requested on farm business, on land use, and on home and family living.

Your committees were interested in more accuracy and in cutting down the time lag between collection and publication of data. They were also interested in the use of timely surveys to show changes that have developed rather quickly because of weather or other major changes in the production and marketing situations with reference to a particular commodity.



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It is of major interest that many States requested the development and publication of a complete bibliography showing what data are actually available. Some of the States also requested help in the use of the available agricultural data and in methods of collecting local data that is not the responsibility of the Crop Reporting Service and the Census Bureau.

Specific requests were received for each of the following major items:

1. County and local data regarding the production of crops and livestock on a quarterly or monthly basis as indicated by the production cycle. Included in the list were livestock, fruits and vegetables, flowers, and specialty crops.
2. More county and State information on farm and nonfarm income with additional breakdown as to size of farm, type of farm, age of operator, source of income, etc. Similar information was requested on major farm cost items.
3. Additional information on the use of major production practices and farm equipment, particularly new practices and new equipment.
4. Additional information on a State and county basis to permit breakdown by size of farm, enterprise, etc.
5. Separate irrigation from non-irrigation production, particularly in the western irrigated areas.
6. Provide additional information needed to trace the movement of farm products via rail or truck, both in and out of the State.
7. Provide information in an increased quantity regarding the destination and utilization of all farm products.
8. Additional price information is needed by grades, classes and uses of all farm products.
9. Much additional information is needed for forestry crops, fruits and vegetables by grades and uses, and specialty crops. This information would include price, utilization, production, etc.
10. Major requests were received for additional information regarding family living and community characteristics. This information covered facilities for living, family living practices, characteristics of the rural family, income and distribution for family living expenses, part-time farming, and off-farm work by sex.



